

- The MONTH with the EDITOR -

Notes, reflections, comment upon medical and health news in both the scientific and public press, briefs of sorts from here, there and everywhere.

A Beloved Physician Passes—Dr. James H. Parkinson died at his cottage in his beloved Sierra Nevada Mountains, Thursday, July 22, at noon, of carcinoma of the prostate. Funeral services were held at the Episcopal Church, Sacramento, Saturday, July 24. Interment private.

More fitting tribute to this widely known Californian and medical leader will be published in the September issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

The Abundant Life, Benjamin Ide Wheeler. By Monroe E. Deutsch, University of California Press, 1926.

The author modestly calls this book "an illustrated record of a great constructive period in the University of California embodied in the best writings and public utterances of its president from 1899 to 1919." It is all of this and very much more. This book, through a judicious selection of President Wheeler's public utterances, affords the student and his friends an insight into the character, aims and accomplishments of one of the foremost scholars, leaders of men, lovers of youth and first citizens of the Golden West.

No man has had greater opportunities, and no man has accomplished more for Western (American) civilization, than Benjamin Ide Wheeler. No man is more beloved—and rightfully so—than he, and his name will stand pre-eminent in the history of California as posterity will read it.

I am neither a native son nor an alumnus of the University of California, but, in common with thousands of others, one of my cherished possessions is the friendship of this universally beloved man.

The University press have built a book in keeping with its contents so ably edited by Professor Deutsch. What a joy is in store for the alumni in the reading of this book, the brief record of an "Abundant Life" still fruitful and helpful!

A well-to-do fellow hick recently discussed with me an interesting complaint about what he considered the outrageous fee of \$250 charged him by a city doctor for removing his appendix, plus a hospital bill of \$90.

A few careful questions elicited the information that his trouble had been of long standing and that his perfectly competent local surgeon had wanted to remove it, proposing a charge of \$100.

He motored to the city, accompanied by his wife and grown daughter, whose hotel bill for the ten days was \$265; three hundred odd dollars went for frocks, etc.; about \$60 went to beauty shops; over a hundred dollars for entertainment and pleasures; and a first payment was made on an expensive combination phonograph and radio set.

Yet this man's only complaint was about the fees of the doctor and hospital. He did not object to a hotel cost of some \$13 a day each for healthy members of his family, but he did object to paying \$9 a day for the far more difficult care of himself by the hospital, and he objected to a surgeon's fee which, considering consequent visits, was not much in excess of his family's "beauty doctor," when compared on a basis of hours of service.

When these facts and comparisons were called to his attention, he admitted their fairness and exposed the inner workings of his mind by a tirade against "bobbied hair."

"Every man," said Oliver Wendell Holmes, "is an omnibus in which all of his ancestors are seated."

No wonder the machine sometimes breaks down or runs through safety stations.

The Medical Society of the County of Kings has received the approval of the State Medical Society of New York for its new constitutional revision permitting the enrollment as associate members of laymen. Only those who are interested in scientific work or in the activities of the society will be accepted under the new provision.—M. J. & R.

The Kings County Society are getting a worldwide reputation for leadership. They initiate one good thing after another and make them succeed. If all of the 3000 odd county societies in the U. S. would follow their lead in this last venture untold good would ensue.

There are millions of intelligent people who would consider it an honor to be associate members of live medical societies, to the betterment of doctors and the cause they serve. Co-operation in health matters would then flow in the right direction—toward capable medical leadership.

The Lay Point of View—A general practitioner is one who looks for the cause instead of blaming it on your teeth.—Los Angeles Times.

Aaron Hardy Ulm (Dearborn Independent, July 3, 1926), writing under the title, "Uncle Sam and the Baby Crop," gives a most telling, effective and withal truthful analysis of the operations of the Sheppard-Towner law.

Doctor Samuel is out-culting the cults in certain phases of the practice of medicine, and in consequence he must accept the rating that public opinion eventually gives to other doctors who presume to practice medicine without adequate preparation for such highly specialized work.

Every physician has received a Directory information card. It is important that this data be forwarded promptly to the A. M. A.

This information will be used in compiling the Tenth Edition of the American Medical Directory, now under revision in the Biographical Department of the Association. The Directory is one of the altruistic efforts of the Association and is published in the interest of the medical profession, which means ultimately in the interest of the public. It is a book of dependable data concerning the physicians and hospitals in the United States and Canada.

"Everything from a cell," enunciated the great Virchow. Yes, and there are more than 26,000,000,000 cells, each requiring its own peculiar fuel, doing its own particular work, preparing for its successor, and yet, in health, working in harmony with its fellows in the most crowded existence known.

In first-page stories now being syndicated, Henry Ford says his hospital co-operates with outside physicians. The outside doctor may escort his patient to the front door, introduce him to the inside doctor and back out! At that Ford has no monopoly on "co-operation."

The Woodshed Method. It is not popular, nor is it quite socially correct to mention "discipline" as applied to children. While we are still reading and listening to the mutterings of "savants" who are urging children to forgive their parents, for they know not what they do, and some of whom reflect even upon the commands of God as being out of date, a few brave souls are beginning to sound danger warnings.

One of these deserves commendation for his frank

statement that what is needed by the youngsters is "woodshed tactics."

Some of these days a wideawake, intelligent American community somewhere or other is going to try stopping crime by punishing the criminals.—Nashville American.

"Be it Resolved by the General Federation of Women's Clubs in convention assembled, that we urge the women of America not to imperil their health and that of future generations by reducing methods other than those advocated by reliable physicians."

Bully for the National Federation!

More power to the facile pen of Arthur J. Cramp, head of our A. M. A. Bureau of Investigation. His publicity in "Hygeia" and elsewhere has a telling effectiveness and he is after the fakirs of yesterday and today. Every doctor will get the worth of his subscription to "Hygeia" from Cramp's contributions alone.

Mary Dewhurst Blankenhorn ("Outlook," June 30) tells a story of "Britain's Superfluous Women" that contains a biologic and health message worth pondering.

What a world this would be if all editors put into practice the conception of their responsibilities as outlined by Frank O. Edgecombe, president of the National Editorial Association, during their recent session in California, when he states:

"To weigh the acts of men and judge the motives behind the acts, to consider private rights and public policies, distinguishing between the trivial and the important, between the claims of the unworthy and the unclaimed rights of the worthy, between the fallacies of the temperamental enthusiast and the vicious pronouncements of the demagogue on the one hand and the solid foundation of truth on the other; to look forward as well as backward and always upward, prudently always and as tranquilly as may be; these are the duties that hourly lie in the path of the conscientious editor."

The plan of the American Medical Association for medical relief in disaster, published in the A. M. A. Bulletin, June, 1926, deserves prompt consideration and action by state and county units of our great federation.

Actinotherapy and Allied Physical Therapy. By T. Howard Plank, M. D. (Manz Corporation, Chicago). This is an interesting book and most physicians, particularly those in unlimited practice who use or would like to employ physical therapy more extensively, may also find it useful. Certainly the subject is important enough, and progress is being made at such a rapid rate and literature is accumulating so fast that the physician who expects to do anything but read and study must rely upon occasional reviews for enlightenment. Doctor Plank has attempted to condense current information of use to the bedside physician in this book of some 450 pages.

"The Ethics of Business," by Edgar L. Heermance (Harper), is a book that every doctor and every other person who wants to be informed in order to be fair-minded should read.

It was not so long ago that newspapers and even more serious formers of public opinion apparently took pleasure in criticizing the code of ethics of physicians. Some still do.

Mr. Heermance shows that hundreds of trade associations, chambers of commerce, advertising clubs, business, fraternal and social organizations today point with pride to their ethical codes. In fact, it would be hard to find a group of interests from bootleggers to bricklayers, from criminals to chiropractors, from bakers to bankers, from miners to ministers, executives, teachers, clubs and what-not who are today without their codes of ethics.

The medical code is the original and oldest because

medicine is the oldest occupation of which we have record. Many of the ethical codes of purely business groups are fully as idealistic and splendid in their purposes as is the physicians' code. The chief trouble with all of them is that human nature is weak and fakirs still fake.

Nevertheless, Mr. Heermance encourages us in the belief that the spirit of ethics is growing among people in all walks of life and that these codes are helpful in our progress toward better things.

It is encouraging to see medical and hospital publicity rapidly focusing on the problem of adequate payments to hospitals for service to industrially or otherwise insured persons.

There is no question but that hospital service to persons insured under industrial accident laws is paid for largely at less than the cost of the service to the hospitals. This wrong is widely prevalent in California, as elsewhere, partly because of the notoriously incomplete accounting systems of many hospitals and because the facts have not been placed clearly enough nor actively enough before insurance carriers or the public.

Insurance carriers quite naturally buy service at what they can get it for, and in the absence of sufficient information, competition and established custom has induced many hospitals to accept this class of patients at a sacrifice.

Wider interest, co-ordinated action and the light shed on the situation by increasing information, warrants the prediction that the difficulty will be remedied; patients will receive more adequate care, and insurance carriers will find the added cost; if not out of present premium rates, these will be increased sufficiently to take the burden of supporting a useful business off the shoulders of voluntary charity.

Scarlet Fever Following Nose and Throat Operations—Of forty-eight cases classed as surgical scarlet fever at the Durand Hospital, from 1902 to 1926, Beatrice R. Lovett, Chicago (Journal A. M. A.), states that twenty followed operations, thirteen of which were on the nose and throat. Of these thirteen cases, seven were instances of scarlet fever following operations for cleft palate, two following resections of the nasal septum, and four following tonsillectomies. The intervals between operation and the first symptoms of the disease were: in two cases, two days; in six cases, three days; in two cases, four days; and in three, a few days. All patients had typical scarlet fever, and most of the cases were of the septic type. Complications were unusually numerous, including two instances of bilateral otitis media, two of unilateral otitis media, and two of sinus infections, making a total of six complicated cases in the series of thirteen. One patient, previously operated on for harelip and cleft palate, died following sloughing of the wounds, with profuse purulent discharge and double otitis media. Four nurses caring for this child caught the infection from him. In most of the cleft palate cases, there was sloughing of the tissues and imperfect closure of the defect, so that, although the wounds healed eventually, the operations were not very successful. The occurrence of scarlet fever in children following operations especially on the nose and throat suggests the wisdom of testing and immunizing the patients beforehand. This is particularly advisable preceding cleft palate operations, since most of the patients are, at a susceptible age, and if scarlet fever develops, complications are frequent, and the results of the operation are poor.

The scientist appears most transcendent when he reaches a correct generalization by reasoning from instances which do not belong to the rule. Once a concept is suggested and formulated in the mind of the observer, the path which first guided may seem to be no longer of moment. The initial hypothesis then becomes a foolish incidental; it takes more than ordinary candor to admit the groundlessness of the first aberrant step. And the history of science is deficient in the details from which one might study the psychology of discovery.—Edward F. Adolph, Science, June 25, 1926.